



# Contract Provider Manual

## Section Twelve (12) - SUPERVISED INDEPENDENT LIVING

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# SCOPE OF SERVICES

Supervised Independent Living (SIL) is a type of voluntary Extended Foster Care placement where young adults can reside in a less restrictive, non-traditional living arrangement while continuing to receive casework and support service to help them become independent and self-sufficient.

## Background

Supervised Independent Living (SIL) is defined as the following: “any housing arrangement with approval and ongoing supervision by Department of Children’s Services (DCS) staff and, as applicable, a contracted provider”. This includes placement services such as DCS or contract agency foster homes or facilities, contracted Independent Living (IL) programs or community-based housing arrangements that include ongoing case management for young adults. These settings are for those young adults who voluntarily continue to be served in foster care after age 18.

## Program

DCS’s goal is to provide a continuum of housing and training opportunities to young adults who are transitioning from foster care to Independent Living or who are in need of a living arrangement that supports their current level of independence.

SIL encompasses the balance between independence and dependence that exists for most young adults in their late teens and early twenties. Most young adults from intact homes return to their families at some point in their young adulthood, taking advantage of this natural safety net for support, whether financial, emotional, and logistical or simply for a place to live. The Extension of Foster Care (EFC) program is designed to include 18, 19 and 20-year old young adults and the creation of these services is a concerted effort toward offering a comparable safety net for foster youth and supporting them as they transition into adulthood. The DCS SIL program allows young adults to live independently under a supervised living arrangement. A young adult in SIL is not supervised 24-hours a day by an adult, and has increased responsibilities.

### **Through SIL a young adult is:**

- a) Allowed increased responsibilities with minimal supervision
- b) Managing his/her own finances
- c) Buying groceries/personal items
- d) Working with a Landlord
- e) Assisted with the transition to independent living
- f) Achieving identified education and employment goals
- g) Accessing community resources
- h) Engaging in needed life skills training
- i) Establishing important relationships

# SIL Settings

There are different housing options that are considered an appropriate SIL setting. These settings have been contracted by DCS, or youth may reside in them while receiving DCS case management and the Independent Living Allowance only. These may include:

1. **Apartment Settings**

An apartment setting is a room or suite of rooms with kitchen facilities designed as a residence and generally located in a building occupied by more than one household. This setting may include on-site management.

2. **Shared Housing Settings**

A shared housing setting is described as a number of people living cooperatively as an unrelated family in a house with an individual or a shared bedroom with a limited number of persons to a bedroom. This involves people renting a house in the community, similar to an apartment situation. This may include on-site management.

3. **Host Home Settings**

A host home setting is a family home with a rented room or garage apartment with access to a kitchen and preferably laundry facilities in the home. The young adult agrees to the household rules and has the independence to come and go as needed for employment, school and other personal and social activities.

4. **Non-College Dorm Settings**

A non-college dorm setting is a building containing a number of private or semiprivate bedrooms for housing a number of persons in a community whose inhabitants are either employed and/or in school and commute to these and other personal and social activities. This is similar to a college dorm without the relationship to an institution of higher learning. This may include on-site management. Example: a general residential operations (GRO) using an empty facility building (housing unit) on the GRO property.

5. **College Dorm Settings\***

A college dorm setting is a building provided by a college or university containing a number of private or semiprivate bedrooms for housing a number of persons in a setting whose inhabitants are in school and commute to these and other personal and social activities. This includes dorms on or off-campus and college co-ops. This may include on-site management.

## Payment Mechanisms and TFACTS Service Types

1. Young adults may be able to receive an Independent Living Allowance (ILA) directly if they reside in a dorm, shared housing situation, non-college dorm and apartment setting. Independent Living Allowance (ILA) can be paid as a per diem; approx. \$400.00 per month to the young adult.
2. Providers may be able to receive the board rate directly if the youth resides in their foster home, apartments, or shared housing situation, but this does not include the ILA at the same time. There is no expectation for the agency to pay an ILA.
3. TFACTS Contract Type: The service type/description is Independent Living Placement Extension of Foster Care/Independent Living Residential Extension of Foster Care.

**Note:** All Continuum providers can utilize SILS and have access to this service type.

# Expectations and Approval of SIL Setting

\* Only SILS that are getting the board rate.

1. The SIL needs to meet basic health and safety standards. TN DCS Independent Living staff complete annual reviews using form, **CS-1060 Supervised Independent Living Annual Checklist for Placement Health and Safety Standards**. This form is uploaded into TFACTs under the placement. If agencies are receiving a contracted board rate, the agency must have protocols in place for the following:
  - a) They must have curfew;
  - b) Guidelines for use of tobacco and smoking areas;
  - c) Medication management;
  - d) Clothing;
  - e) Allowance;
  - f) Telephone;
  - g) Groceries;
  - h) Grievance procedures;
  - i) Transportation;
  - j) Cable;
  - k) Guidelines for guests;
  - l) Staffing;
  - m) Supervision; and
  - n) After hour's emergencies protocols.

**Note:** Other contractual requirements may apply, based on level of care.

2. The provider staff can call or visit each youth unannounced periodically throughout the week to ensure youth are conducting themselves in a manner consistent with the program's expectations.
3. The provider staff, minimally, has face-to-face contact with young adults once a week and are available through email, text or phone calls.
4. The agency assists in development of life skills based upon ongoing needs/strengths, and documents on the monthly summary form in TFACTS.

## Services that could Support the Youth

1. **Food**- The provider ensures the young adult receives at least \$100.00 per month to be used toward the purchase of food.
2. **Job Placement Assistance** – Assistance provided by the provider, contracted staff, certified guidance counselor, school system or other approved entity in helping an emerging adult find appropriate part or full-time employment.
3. **Vocational Assessments, Services, Planning & Training** – Administering and implementing vocational aptitude assessments, interest surveys, vocational planning and coaching and vocational training. Services for vocational training and coaching may be accomplished through enrollment in vocational training courses or approved apprenticeships.
4. **Self-Sufficiency Skill Training** – Evaluation of the level of independent living skills, with targeted training, mentoring, coaching and teaching of these skills to enable independence as part of the

youth's treatment plan and delivery. The use of a life skills assessment is encouraged to understand needs and strengths.

5. **Transitional Living Services** – Career planning and enrollment preparation for post-secondary education, apartment living or other appropriate services for young adults moving to independence.
6. **Connections**–Agency works with the young adult to develop connections to caring adults.
7. **Health and Essential Documents**– Obtain original personal documents: state identification, birth certificate, and social security card. Establish primary dentist and doctor(s) (medical and psychiatric) within walking distance and/or minimal bus ride of the new residence. Identify the need for social security benefits due to disabilities and help them apply.

## Special Considerations

1. The agency has a zero tolerance policy against sexual abuse/sexual assault and or rape of any kind (see DCS Policy [18.8, Zero-Tolerance Standards and Guidelines for Sexual Abuse, Assault, Harassment or Rape Incidents and PREA](#)).
2. SILS are not required to be licensed.
3. College dorms do not need to be approved and youth get an ILA.

## Eligibility Requirements for SIL

1. SIL is available for a young adult who is able to:
  - a) Demonstrate a reasonable level of maturity and ability to manage the expectations required in a SIL setting with minimal supervision and case management; and be able to
  - b) Meet eligibility requirements for Extended Foster Care.
  - c) Demonstrate ability to meet personal goals without constant supervision documented in case file by completion of the program. Youth can enter the program through a referral by another agency or the state of Tennessee.
  - d) Complete an agency's application and acceptance process, if required.
2. The young adult must be:
  - a) Turning 18 while in DCS care and approved for Extension of Foster Care Services, or
  - b) Already approved and participating in Extension of Foster Care Services, or
  - c) Re-establishing Extension of Foster Care Services EFCS prior to 21 and
  - d) Must participate in a high school, GED/HiSET or post-secondary program.
  - e) Must be in compliance with attendance policy established by high school, GED/HiSET or post-secondary program.
  - f) Young adults who are unable to do one of the above requirements because of a medical condition may also be eligible for services and supports.
3. The young adult may also:
  - a) Must maintain a job sufficient for payment of bills and contributions to savings each month, if this is part of the program attended
  - b) Pay bills in a timely manner and maintain a budget
  - c) Do their own grocery shopping
  - d) Clean the house/apartment daily
  - e) Cook well balanced meals, if in a setting where cooking is required

- f) Not have ANY alcohol or drugs in the house/apartment
  - g) Be required to control the noise level in the house/apartment
  - h) Exhibit good daily personal hygiene
  - i) Not be arrested
  - j) There are no transportation limitation requirements.
4. If the young adult meets the eligibility requirements above, and needs access or has any questions about the program, they can contact their local DCS Independent Living Specialist. The contact information is located at <http://www.tn.gov/dcs/article/independent-living-staff> under the IL contact list.

## DCS Collaboration with the SIL Provider

In addition to what is required for monthly visits in Extended Foster Care Monthly face-to-face visits, the DCS caseworker has discussions about and documents the young adult's:

- a) Access to community resources and services;
- b) Progress in achieving Transition Plan goals, to include supervised independent living (SIL) placement and personal goals;
- c) Adequacy of furnishings (such as necessary furniture, cooking utensils and linens);
- d) Ability to make good decisions;
- e) Use of available funds;
- f) Services provided by the SIL provider;
- g) Review of disaster and safety plans.

The DCS FSW contacts the DCS supervised independent living (SIL) provider at least once a month to collaborate on monitoring the Young adult's on-going progress and Extension of Foster Care activity status updates. Within thirty (30) days of placement and on an ongoing basis, the FSW ensures the DCS SIL provider receives copies of any updated plans of service or transition plans.

## Eligibility Record

The DCS Independent Living specialist performs routine reviews of the young adult's continued eligibility for Extended Foster Care, including Independent Living Allowance (ILA) and scholarships, and ensures the young adult is living in a safe and healthy situation.

## Notifications

Following the initial supervised independent living (SIL) placement, the caseworker ensures that the young adult notifies family members, other caring adults and involved advocates regarding the SIL placement and contact information.

# Discharge from Extended Foster Care

Discharge from Extended Foster Care can occur when the young adult completes Extended Foster Care goals, loses eligibility to be in Extended Foster Care, or at the request of DCS, the foster parent and the contract provider or the young adult.

Actions to Prevent Unplanned Discharge from Extended Foster Care for young adults may include:

- a) Helping the young adult commit to short term goals and develop short term plans;
- b) Reviewing options and consequences with the young adult;
- c) Helping the young adult visualize what happens as he or she leaves care;
- d) Holding a Transition Plan meeting to discuss the concerns and how these concerns may be alleviated.